



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

Going Green at School with Go Green Illinois

The latest [Go Green Illinois](#) meeting was on all things green schools, and SGA's Becky Brodsky was there to talk zero waste with dozens of attendees from 25 communities around Illinois. A fantastic lineup of speakers covered a wide variety of ways schools can become more sustainable, from waste reduction and hiring sustainability coordinators, to transitioning to electric buses and installing onsite solar.



Phoebe Beierle from the [Center for Green Schools](#) kicked off the webinar with a look at the organization's efforts to create greener schools. The Center supports and trains people in school systems to implement sustainability initiatives and become change agents, with a focus specifically on school staff. They host the [Green Schools Conference](#) (Feb. 27 – Mar. 1 this year) and run the School Sustainability Leaders Network, which has over 150 districts represented across the country and more than 300 participants. That said, according to Beierle, sustainability roles in K-12 schools are still not very common.

Read full article [HERE](#).

The Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition expands its mission



The Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition (IFSCC or Coalition), a non-profit corporation that advances diversion and composting of all organics in the state of Illinois, recently announced organizational updates that clarify and support the Coalition's mission and

membership and better reflect the good work already being done by the Coalition. Updates included a new logo, an expansion of their name to add the word "composting," and hiring an Executive Director. Check out the full press release [HERE](#).

Member participation and financial support are critical to the IFSCC. All members are encouraged to participate, express their views, and share their expertise in order to contribute to the organization's mission. Learn more about membership [HERE](#).

Green Schools Conference

Feb. 27 - Mar. 1, 2023, New Orleans, LA

The Green Schools Conference (GSC) is the only event to bring together all stakeholders involved in making green schools a reality: people who lead, operate, build, and teach in schools. Designed to educate, connect, and inspire, attendees of this three-day in person conference will explore interdisciplinary content during general sessions, while also having dedicated time with peers to work through specific challenges, share best practices, and generate momentum to further green school actions across the country.



The 2023 program will address environmental impact, health and wellbeing, sustainability literacy, equity, and whole school sustainability. Attendees will learn from each other and will have the opportunity to connect with other green school champions.

GSC is presented by the [Center for Green Schools](#) at the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), in partnership with the [Green Schools National Network \(GSNN\)](#).

Register [HERE](#).

Plastic Free Lunch Day, April 19



The next national [Plastic Free Lunch Day \(PFLD\) USA](#) will be held on April 19, 2023 – just in time for Earth Day! PFLD is hosted by Cafeteria Culture in partnership with the [Urban School Food Alliance](#), which represents 18 of the nation's largest school districts, including Chicago. Is your school or school district on board to participate in this fun and exciting student-led action to reduce single-use plastics in school cafeterias?

Why host a Plastic Free Lunch Day? U.S. schools serve 7.35 billion meals annually. Those meals are packed with single-use plastics and make a significant contribution to the U.S. plastic waste stream. PFLD is a great way to start eliminating unnecessary single-use plastics. If every school in the U.S. reduces 2 pieces of plastic per school lunch each day, that would amount to 10 billion pieces of plastic per school year!

Cafeteria Culture's award-winning student-led movie [Microplastic Madness](#) will screen free for all K-12 schools that lead a plastic-free action before April 30. Register for a screening [HERE](#) and get your K-12 packet of how-to materials, which includes everything you need to hold a successful event, [HERE](#). Start planning *now* to get food service director buy-in and to allow ample time to choose a menu that will facilitate going plastic-free.

Beyond Plastic Pollution online course

Take a deep dive into the problem of plastic pollution by enrolling in Bennington College's [Beyond Plastic Pollution](#) online course this spring. Taught by Judith Enck - founder and president of [Beyond Plastics](#) - this environmental policy class is **open to people of**

all ages, including high school and college students. This class is for those who want to tackle the issue of plastic in their own community, state, and nation.

Wednesdays, 7-9 pm EST, April 19 - May 31
Cost: \$100 to audit or \$400 to receive college credit



Learn more and register [HERE](#). Email capa@bennington.edu for more information.

Reserve your tickets for the One Earth Film Festival

Mar. 3 - 12



Join [One Earth Collective](#) for the 12th annual [One Earth Film Festival](#) (OEFF). OEFF is the Midwest's premier environmental film festival creating opportunities for understanding climate change, sustainability, and the power of human involvement.

Inspiring and thought-provoking environmental films are followed by interactive post-film discussions focused on solutions.

This year's festival theme "Let's Get Loud!" is inspired by the words of [Dr. Katherine Hayhoe](#), a renowned climate scientist who has said that the most important thing we can do to fight climate change is to talk about it. OEFF is an opportunity to raise our voices and spread awareness about the urgent need to address the climate crisis, discuss actions-based solutions, and create real and lasting change.

View the film schedule and reserve your tickets [HERE](#).

Young Filmmakers Contest

Students from 3rd grade through age 25 are invited to submit their short environmental films to the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) by **June 25, 2023**.

Winning films will be screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center (Chicago, Illinois) in September 2023 and/or at the One Earth Film Festival in March 2024. Scholarship awards, prizes, and matching grants (from \$100 to \$1000) are available for 3- to 8-minute films or 45+ second animations.

Four Strategies to Ensure District Leadership Buy-in for Green School Practices

District leadership is critical to the success of any sustainability efforts in schools. This recent [article](#) from the Green Schools National Network details how to make the case for green schools and enlist the support of district leadership. Read on to learn how these four strategies can help advocates with their greening efforts:



**GREEN SCHOOLS
NATIONAL NETWORK**

- Engaging Community Allies
- Empowering Board Members as Sustainability Champions
- Assembling a District Sustainability Committee
- Developing a Sustainability Action Plan

Reducing waste with bulk milk dispensers

Did you know that producing just one gallon of milk requires 144.2 gallons of water and creates 17.6 pounds of CO₂? This



means that the milk wasted each school year in schools across the United States (45 million gallons, to be exact) uses nearly 10,000 Olympic-size swimming pools worth of water and emits the same amount of CO₂ as 77,000 gas-powered vehicles.

The good news? **Installing bulk milk dispensers saves 248 gallons of water and 30 pounds of CO₂ per student each school year.** Read this [recent story](#) by the World Wildlife Fund to learn more about how installing bulk milk dispensers can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, and save your school money.

Grants and other opportunities

[Urban Growers Collective Youth Corps After School Matters Program](#) is now accepting Chicago teens' applications for their Spring programs. Teens ages 14-18 can choose between two of UGC's farm sites this Spring: Roosevelt Square Farm and South Chicago Farm. Teens interested in the UGC Youth Corps will expand their understanding of urban farming, community food systems, and business development through a STEAM curriculum. **Spring programs run from Feb. 27 - May 12.**

[Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant](#) This grant provides \$3,000 to support a new or existing edible educational garden located at either a K-12 school or at a nonprofit organization that serves children in grades K-12. **Deadline: Mar. 1.**

[Illinois Conservation Foundation's Conservation Achievement Scholarship](#) Awarded to 4 high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, and long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement, and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. **Deadline: Mar. 3.**

[Project Green Schools Outdoor Classroom Challenge](#) Pre-K-12 schools across the country are invited to develop and implement a meaningful outdoor classroom and learning space that awards one Grand Prize of \$10,000 to further enhance an existing space or build a new space. Schools will submit a formal write-up, proposed budget, and design of their outdoor learning classroom/space. Project Green Schools will invite the top five designs to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges in Spring 2023 to determine the \$10,000 winner. **Deadline: Mar. 26.**

[USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants](#) The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on [Grants.gov](#). **Deadline: Mar. 27.**

[School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants](#) Eligible applicants have the opportunity to win equipment grants, each worth between \$20,000 to \$100,000 of equipment. The recipients will be notified in May of 2023. Applications and photos must be submitted by a school nutrition director. **Deadline: Mar. 31.**

[Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant](#) Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Events

[18th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit](#)

Feb. 8-10, virtually and in person at the Student Center East, UIC750 S. Halsted St., Chicago
The Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC), in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events (DCASE), is hosting this year's 18th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit, "Future Proofing the Food System."

Attainable Sustainable Institute Day Class 2023

Mar. 3, in-person at SCARCE Education Center, 800 S. Rohlwing Rd (Route 53), Unit D, Addison, IL
Join SCARCE for this fast-paced class packed with resources, hands-on activities, and ideas for the classroom. This class also includes a guided tour at the DuPage County Water Commission and offers 5 PDs. Registration open to teachers from DuPage County schools only. **\$25 non-refundable transportation fee required.**

Loyola University's Climate Change Conference: Human Migration in the Era of Climate Change

Mar. 16, Damen Student Center, 6511 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago
Loyola University Chicago's Climate Change Conference will explore how climate-driven migration will affect communities worldwide.

Re-imagine, Re-design & Re-cycle: School Waste Collection Systems That Work!

Mar. 22, 3pm cst
Attendees of this webinar will hear from three different school district leaders about their recent innovations in bin design, construction, and placement, including students who are building their own receptacles and hallway recycling programs that are helping to maintain one districts' classroom eating program.

EEAI 2023 Conference EE In Action

April 14 - 15, Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Moline, IL
This year's conference will focus on promoting the development of active and responsible citizens through sessions and workshops that promote hands-on learning and out-of-the-classroom experiences that bring students into the community. These experiences will help students expand their roles as learners and to become active stewards of the environment.

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